

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information processing apparatus  
comprising:

5 a function database which stores functions which  
can be assigned to keys, the functions being  
categorized according to types of the functions; and

an assigning unit which assigns an arbitrary one  
of the functions stored in the function database to one  
of the keys.

10 2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
the function database stores the functions classified  
into a key code group and a program group.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
the function database stores the functions classified  
15 into at least a key code group, a program group, and a  
previously used function group.

4. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
the assigning unit comprises a user interface which  
specifies a key to which a function is to be assigned.

20 5. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
the assigning unit comprises a user interface which  
presents a user with the functions stored in the  
function database and categorized according to types of  
the functions.

25 6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
the assigning unit comprises a user interface which  
presents a user with functions assigned to the keys and

functions which can be assigned to the keys.

7. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the assigning unit comprises a user interface which selects and changes any of the functions stored in the function database and functions assigned to the keys.

8. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the assigning unit comprises a user interface which selects a group including functions to be assigned to the keys.

9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the function database stores functions for application programs managed by a system or programs which can be started and functions for key codes managed by the system or key codes that can be combined together.

10. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the user interface presents the user with one of hardware keys, operation buttons, software keys, and software buttons as keys to which functions can be assigned.

11. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the assigning unit comprises a unit which, when a new function is assigned to one of the keys, transfers a function previously assigned to this key from the key code group or program group related to this key to the previously used function group.

12. The apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising a presenting unit which presents the user

with an operation screen on which assignment of a function to a key to which the function has been assigned is changed based on a pressing condition of the key.

5           13. A method of assigning a function to a key of an information processing apparatus, the method comprising:

              creating a database for storing functions categorized according to types of the functions; and  
10           presenting a user with the stored functions.

              14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the creating comprises creating the database which stores the functions classified into a key code group and a program group.

15           15. The method according to claim 13, wherein the presenting comprises selectively presenting the user with the functions according to the types of the functions.

              16. The method according to claim 13, wherein the  
20           presenting comprises presenting the user with an arbitrary one of the functions.

              17. The method according to claim 13, wherein the creating comprises creating the database which stores the function assigned to a key before for a previously  
25           used function group.

              18. The method according to claim 13, wherein the presenting comprises presenting the user with an

operation screen on which assignment of a function to a key to which the function has been assigned is changed based on a pressing condition of the key.

5        19. The method according to claim 13, wherein the presenting comprises presenting the user with assignable keys to which functions can be assigned and a step of presenting the user with a location of the assignable key.